



NIKKEI IMAGES

Japanese Canadian National Museum Newsletter ISSN#1203-9017 Spring 2002, Vol. 7, No. 1

Celebration of Japanese Canadian Redress

by Edward Broadbent, Toronto, November 10, 2001

I am pleased to take part in this evening “to celebrate the redress settlement for the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II”. It took 46 years for the government of Canada to acknowledge a terrible wrong inflicted upon so many Canadian citizens. Although the senior military authorities clearly indicated to the Prime Minister of Canada that they constituted no threat to our nation’s security, 22,000 Canadians of Japanese ancestry had their families broken up, their property confiscated, their businesses destroyed - and most of all, their dignity as human beings profoundly assaulted.

I am happy to share a platform tonight with the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney who as Prime Minister in 1988, said enough is enough and brought into the House of Commons a resolution which acknowledged this deep injustice that was done to so many of our fellow citizens. I congratulated him at the time and I warmly do so once again tonight.

What is the significance of the redress for human rights today?

1. First and foremost that rights come into being and just arrangements are made because of the actions of committed minorities. Although I give credit to the prime minister for political leadership, we all know that Parliament would not have acted to restore the stolen legitimacy of many, had it not been for the aggressive determination of the victims themselves. Of particular importance

was the leadership of second and third generation Japanese Canadians. They were courageous, bothersome, diligent, impatient, intelligent, and proud. They were a nuisance to those with power and a joy to observe for all those who believe in freedom. They persuaded a majority of Canadians during their three-year long campaign that justice was on their side. I salute them tonight for affirming their right to act like free citizens in a free country!

2. The second point I would make about the significance of the redress flows directly from the consequences of September 11th of this year. The Japanese Canadians in 1942 were wrongly blamed by the mere fact of association, for an act of war done by others. This is true. But it is also true that they were a visible minority, already subject to racial prejudice by a white majority. This made it easier for that majority to accept in self-incriminating silence the theft of their property and

the attacks on their dignity - I believe part of the legacy of the struggle for a just settlement by the Japanese Canadians and by the act of Parliament, is that today the 200,000 Muslims in the Toronto area and Canadians from the Middle-East and South America where ever they live in our country are less threatened than otherwise would be the case. Although racism continues to exist, Canadians, more than in the past, have become open to seeing difference as a national advantage and have been more prone to defend visible minorities, in part because Japanese Canadian as one of those minorities proudly and successfully struggled to assert their claims for justice in the 1980s.

3. The third and final point I would make is that a nation great in its sense of justice should learn from its mistakes. We all know that those responsible for the murderous acts in New York and Washington must be brought to justice. The re-

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“Unearthed from the Silence”

Exhibit Opening and
JCNM Open House
February 23, 2002
1:00-3:30 pm

Kampai: Wine and Sake Tasting
at NNHC
May 24, 2002
7:00-9:30 pm

NIPPON MARU is Coming!

Steveston, BC
July 12-17, 2002

Second Annual
Community Celebration Dinner
September, 2002

Nikkei Images is published by
the Japanese Canadian
National Museum

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Corporate \$100
\$1 per copy for non-members

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response, however, must be proportional to the need. The anti-terrorist legislation currently before Parliament has serious problems. Members of Parliament from all parties, Cabinet Ministers, the Privacy and Access to Information Commissions and the head of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association have all expressed concerns about the bills flaws which unnecessarily impact

on our rights and freedoms. All Canadians, I suggest, should insist the government address these concerns *before* the bill becomes law. Tonight we are celebrating a successful struggle for the redress of human rights abuses from the past. We should be equally vigilant in our efforts to prevent them in the present.

Thank you. a

Yoshio Johnny Madokoro

by Dennis Madokoro

Trolling out of Tofino in 1941 was good. The war in Europe meant that prices were high. We were making good money; I think the average Co-op member was making \$4,000, which was big money in those days. Mary and I had the two young boys and life seemed very good. My mother, Ine, was healthy and she helped to look after the children and the garden. My brother Thomas turned out to be a natural born fisherman and he was consistently high boat in the Co-op. It was a wonderful year where everything seemed possible.

December 7, 1941 changed all that. Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and all our limitless possibilities crashed in a whirlwind of newflashes, rumours and innuendo. Our tranquil little world was turned upside down because Japan had declared war on the United States. I firmly believe that we Japanese Canadians were swept up by this struggle between these two nations and we were helpless as the world we knew disappeared forever.

The first news came like a bomb. “*Have you heard?*” “*Japan is at war with the US.*” “*It can’t be true.*” “*It is.*” I don’t remember how I felt. I think it was a feeling of disbelief. This was something that in my wildest dreams I couldn’t imagine. But it had, and as one of the executives of the Tofino Co-op, I was ex-

pected to find out what was happening and to help decide how we should react. The local RCMP Commissioner told us, you guys would be ok because you are all naturalized Canadians. That would be one of the many pieces of misinformation that we would receive over the next few months.

There was a distinct chill between the non-Japanese and the Japanese community. Talk was kept to a minimum. *Hakujin* friends didn’t spend as much time with us anymore. We Japanese in Tofino were left to talk amongst ourselves. When you are fearful of the future that talk can turn increasingly anxious. That happened in spades to our community. It was as if our Japanese families were being punished for what Japan had done in Pearl Harbour. Some Japanese were secretly proud of that event; they thought it signified the emergence of Japan as a major power. Others were obsessed with how they could prove that they were good Canadian citizens. For myself, I thought of how my two boys were going to come though all this.

On December 15, 1941, our boats were ordered to New Westminster. Soldiers were sent to accompany each boat. I suppose it was to ensure that we didn’t help the enemy infiltrate the West Coast. If they had done their homework, they would have realized that was not a

possibility. Hysteria stirred up by the media and local politicians stirring up the “yellow peril” image made the decision to single out the Japanese Canadians an easy task. We were not equipped to deal with this violent backlash. We were sitting ducks.

Anyway, the soldier assigned to my boat, the **CROWN**, was a decent enough fellow. He was a prairie boy, born and raised in Melville, Saskatchewan. He had never been at sea and during the voyage to New Westminster, he was dreadfully seasick. I heard similar stories from the other fishermen too. Funny how individual *hakujin* Canadians were so decent, yet from the newspapers and radio, we Japanese Canadians were all traitors.

In 1942, around February or March, a small floatplane circled around Tofino Harbour. One of the other members of the Co-op, a vice-president and I thought that it might be some news about us. We went to meet the plane. There, we heard the orders, you have twelve hours to pack your belongings and be evacuated. We told them no way could we do that. They finally relented and allowed us twenty-four hours. That was all the time we had to gather up our essentials. We thought that we were coming back. Another lie!

Harold Kimoto and I were the ones to negotiate the deal. This allowed us to stay for twenty-four hours. As we were to find out, this was an exception that the Tofino gang was able to arrange. As far as I know the other communities and their leaders accepted the original twelve-hour order, without a fight. I suppose in hindsight, if we had organized, we might better have been able to protect our rights. At the time though, we simply accepted what was happening to us as the power of the Canadian Government.

The day of departure came. We were all down at the Government

Wharf with our duffle bags to wait for the **MAQUINNA**. It was March of 1942. We would not see the West Coast and Tofino for another ten years. I was feeling like my whole life was being turned upside down. Whatever I had known was now slipping away and I didn't know if we would ever see this life again. I was down as far as I could go but for the sake of my boys, my wife, my mother, and my community, I tried to remain calm and clear. This was not a time to go flying off the handle. Not now!

The **MAQUINNA** took us up the Alberni Inlet to Port Alberni. It was a silent passage and there was much weeping among the women and children as we slipped away from the Government Dock. Goodbye Father. We were off on a journey that would take us to a different world. Our old world was no more.

In Port Alberni, the Provincial Police were waiting for us at the docks. They took us to the local Police Station. After they checked their lists, something that would become routine to us, we were loaded on the CN train to Nanaimo. We were becoming known more as anonymous numbers and less as individual members of a community.

You know that is what really hurts even to this day; we were stripped of our identities and treated as “undesirables” even though we had not committed any crime. Our crime was being Japanese Canadians! Canada had a funny way of dealing with their own citizens.

At Nanaimo, we boarded the ferry to Vancouver. By then, the shock of being uprooted had given way to anger at the way we were being treated. Those of us who had been educated in the Canadian school system were wondering where in the world the ideals of British “fair play” had vanished. Why was this happening to us? Little did we know all the political behind the scenes moves that were occurring in the legislatures of Victoria and Ottawa. We were literally “pawns” caught up in the hysteria of the threat of “the yellow peril”.

From the ferry in Vancouver, we were loaded like cattle into a bus and taken to the infamous Hastings Park. It was a bloody horse stable that they used for the local livestock shows! It reeked of horse manure and horse urine. This was to be our home for the next week. The women started to cry and the children became upset. Is this any way to treat citizens?

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Schreiber Camp in western Ontario. (Larry Maekawa photo, 1942)

Anyway we cleaned out the stinky hay and cleaned up the stables as best we could. It was after all a horse stable and not meant for human habitation. We were starting to find out how much some “fellow” Canadians hated us.

The next day the gang from Cumberland arrived. There was a buzz of conversation as we “one-day veterans” of Hastings Park greeted them. “*What have you heard?*” “*Where are the possible destinations?*” “*Would we be allowed to stay together with our families?*” No one had any answers; we were looking for information from anyone and everyone.

By the end of the week, we had converted the stables into makeshift sleeping quarters. Blankets served as walls to designate one family’s living area from another. We were even allowed to get passes to leave the Park so that we might do some shopping. Imagine that, it was all too surreal, here we were prisoners of the country and we were downtown in Woodward’s shopping. The local Chinese wore tags on their clothes that proclaimed them Chinese. I guess they didn’t want to be mistaken for us.

The third day the Victoria gang arrived. The Nisei from Victoria were more educated than the rest of us. However, they had no answers. By the end of two days, a list was posted that had one hundred and twenty names, all men, on it. The men named were to be shipped out to Ontario to work on the roads. They would be separated from their families. I had two young kids and my name as well as all the Tofino gang and all the young men in Hastings Park were on that list. There was an explosion of outrage as we absorbed this latest order. Many of the men were shouting, “*Damn, I will never go!*” We held a secret meeting in the back and posted lookouts. All of us agreed that we would not accept any order that separated us from our families. That is what we said then.

Later, we saw that several men suddenly had their names taken off the list. There were many “arrangements” and one by one, the number of names grew smaller. I thought, this is typical; everyone tries to talk his or her way out of the list. So much for our solidarity to the order!

One week after we had arrived in Hastings Park, the remaining men on that list were assembled in front of the Park. We were lined up and again, a roll call was made. Once more, we were being reduced to anonymous numbers, rounded up like cattle and shipped out. At the CPR station in Vancouver, the men were in a vile mood. There was much shouting and cursing. “*How in the world could Canada treat us Canadians in such a terrible way?*” “*Here we were Canadian born men, being shipped out thousands of miles to a work camp.*” “*Our wives, our children, our parents were left on their own. What in the*

Hell was going on?” “*Who in the world was looking out after our interests?*” It was one of the loneliest moments in my life. When the train stopped at a railroad crossing, we looked out the windows and cursed every *hakujin* that we saw. This was not “our” Canada anymore.

At first the Mounties on the train watched us closely. Once we got to Banff, the mood changed. I think they got to know us a little. They were good people, and once away from the coast, they treated us ok. In hindsight, I think people on the West Coast were hysterical about a possible invasion. We were the potential “enemy” there. In Calgary, for example, they even let us leave the train and go for a beer. Everyone came back. No one ran away.

When we got to Schreiber, Ontario, it turned out to be a settlement of mostly Italian people. Schreiber was a roundhouse station for the CPR. That meant it was a place that the CPR used to swing their locomotives around in the opposite direction. The local people were just like your next-door neighbors. They treated us well. Perhaps not all Canadians hated us. Perhaps the West Coast had its own peculiar culture of hysteria. Perhaps Canada after all had a conscience and a basic decency. What did we know; we were being flung around like so much unwanted baggage? It was reassuring that the people in Schreiber related to us as one human being to another.

The road camp was located just outside Schreiber. In town, there was a drug store owner who let us Japanese boys stay in the store overnight. He just went home and shut off the lights downstairs in the store. Upstairs, we Tofino boys would gamble all night. Nothing was ever missing in the drugstore. He trusted us and we did not betray that trust.

Sometimes we went bowling in the evening. There weren’t a whole lot of things to do in this little town of Schreiber. The Victoria boys were pretty good bowlers and we fishing guys from Tofino tried our hand



Japanese evacuees on sugar beet farm at Glencoe, Ontario. Johnny Madokoro at extreme left. (Larry Maekawa photo, 1942)

at it. We were at the road camp for one month when a representative from the Commission in charge of us Japanese came looking for volunteers. “*What kind of volunteers*” we asked? They needed guys to harvest sugar beets. “*Where are these sugar beets?*” we asked. The farms were in Southern Ontario near London. Right away, I put up my hand as a volunteer. The whole Tofino gang and Victoria gang volunteered, we were so anxious to get away from this little town in the middle of Northern Ontario.

We were shipped to Toronto enroute to the sugar beet farms. There we went looking for a restaurant for some breakfast. No one said anything to him or her. In fact, one of the security guards came up to them and said, “*Where did you guys come from, Mexico?*” We just smiled at him and said nothing. The difference between that attitude and the hostility we faced on the West Coast was amusing. We walked up Yonge Street but there were not too many spots open. Finally we found one that was open and had ourselves some breakfast.

The train took us to Glencoe, Ontario, near Chatham. There, in a kind of surreal moment, the Ladies Auxiliary held a tea for us. One of the ladies stood up and welcomed us and thanked us for helping out with the sugar beet farming. These were farmers and we were fishermen. There was work to be done and they were appreciative of our helping hands. They were not concerned that we were Japanese. We felt this sense of common decency and were touched by her comments. So, they were looking for someone from our group to say something in response. I think it was Roger Obata who stood up and gave a very nice reply.

Well this good feeling lasted until we saw that there was a guard at the gate to the compound where we were billeted. “*Nice, we come to help you in your farming and you put a guard on us*” we said. There was more grumbling of that nature. The next morning we looked out, No guard! Hello Glencoe, nice to be here.

As I mentioned the boys from Victoria were all high school students. They were able to express themselves in English. Fellows like Jack Hemmy, Shimizu and Uyede were good talkers and debaters. Pretty soon through their efforts in the sugar beet fields, the town was wide open to us. The townspeople treated the Japanese boys well and we sure did a lot of work for them. The going pay was 25 cents an hour, about two dollars for our eight-hour day.

Pretty soon a few of the fellows got permission from the head of the Japanese Commission to go back to BC and join their families. I chose not to because I knew there would be no work for me. I figured the chance to



Bunkhouse where Japanese evacuees were accommodated in Glencoe. (Larry Maekawa photo, 1942)

work was out here, not in hostile BC. Thomas and I spoke to the Commission about Kapuskasing. They needed me to cut pulpwood. I mentioned that I was a good mechanic and was there a chance to get to Toronto. I had Mr. Yanai, a relative of my wife there.

About a week before the work was finished at Glencoe, I got permission to go to Toronto. Mr. Yanai was not enthusiastic about my chance in Toronto. He said there was no work and conditions were bad. I guess in hindsight, conditions were as you made them. He was older and perhaps more anxious about his prospects. I was still young and full of confidence about what I could do.

My first job was welding transformers; you know those great big ones? I got the job through sheer “chutzipah”. They asked me, “*Did I have any experience?*” I said “*Sure, lots*” and in the meantime, I was taking welding lessons at a school on Church Street. Well, I guess I talked my way into that job, and I did ok. The pay was 35 cents an hour. I worked at night, attended school during the day and shared a flat with my brother Michi.

The flat was one room and a kitchen. We shared a bathroom with the other tenants. It was ok, and pretty soon I had enough money to put down five hundred dollars down payment for a house on Phoebe Street. Mr. Makioka made the arrangements. The house is still standing. Man, that was a big thing! We stayed there almost ten years.

So, my wife Mary and I were separated for about a year and a half. I had left BC in the fall of 1941. The only contact I had with her was letters. Mary stayed with my sister Kuni in the ghost town of Slocan. My sister Kuni had married Joe Nakagawa in 1941. They were engaged just before all this nonsense started. I am not too sure who their *byshaku nin* was.

This article was transcribed by Dennis Madokoro from an interview of his father, Yoshio Madokoro. a

Memoirs of Yukinori Peter Takasaki as translated by Mayumi Takasaki



Yukinori Takasaki in Iron Springs (Ina Kuramoto photo, 1942)

Because of Canada's wartime laws, persons of Japanese ancestry were ordered to evacuate 100 miles from the coast in April 1942. So we left all our belongings behind and left the BC coast, left Canoe Pass where we had lived for so many years. We had to move to Alberta, taking with us our newborn baby, Kumiko who had been born at the end of January 1942. As one 24-year old male thinking of the future at that time, it is perhaps that we three brothers plus relatives, Teizo and Kazuo, put our strengths together as one family, that we were able to come safely through the war and after. The summer of 1942 when we moved to Iron Springs, Alberta was very hot, and from May onwards there were many days in a row when the temperature reached above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Because our group consisted of five men, the Alberta farmer who took us as workers was very happy.

The cultivation of sugar beets in the summer of 1942 was truly physical abuse. At least today things have improved and it is all done with machines, but in those days it was all done with manual labour. And, to

not waste time, we worked in a group of five at a frantic pace, beaded with sweat. For us who had only been fishermen, and now doing unfamiliar farm work, we were like fish out of water. Nevertheless, we somehow endured life in Alberta for almost 10 years.

With no time to rest during summer and winter, I am often amazed at how hard we worked. During my spare time while working in the beet fields, I would do carpentry work for a construction company in town, and after the beet crop was harvested, I would spend the winter working for the construction company.

Spring, summer, fall and winter working without a break. Among the brothers I was the only one who could do carpentry, and was able to work almost every winter. And so, economically, in comparison to others, I was able to make life a little easier for Hisako. There was always lots of work during breaks in the sugar beet fields. There is a lot of work in the wheat fields also, and harvesting wheat is especially heavy labour. We would work without shirts during the day everyday, and our skin would become very rough, and our backs would hurt so much that there were many nights we could not sleep. I thought that there were not many harder jobs than this in the world. Today, using large combine machinery, many acres a day are harvested. There are still farmers who remember the hard work of harvesting wheat in the past.

Of course, we had never driven a car in BC, but the Alberta farmer was very generous and would readily lend us his new car. Then, during wheat harvest time, I was asked to drive a 3-ton truck, and so from the first day, I was driving a truck fully loaded with wheat through

the fields to the storehouse. I am amazed that I was able to drive that truck. And, at the end of the year, we bought a new truck.

In Alberta we relied entirely on coal, in summer for cooking and in winter for heating as well. Near our house was a 10-ton mountain of coal, dumped close to the door. To maintain our supply, we would borrow the truck, about two times in our spare time in the fall, to go buy coal. While replenishing our supply, I would get more experience driving the truck, and would get better at shifting gears, going up and down the hills on the road home.

Alberta farms are large in scale and have many vehicles. The tractors and trucks are large and the farmers would allow us to use any of them freely. During the war, we had a coupon system to purchase gasoline for personal cars, but there were no gas restrictions for Canadian farmers. So, the farm owner would always give us gasoline for our car so that we could drive around.

Our lives in Alberta did not change very much during 1943 and 1944, only that we continued to work without rest all during the year. And every morning and night we used to listen to the NHK overseas radio news to hear about the war, but it was all about Japanese victories. At the same time, Canadian and American news was only about their victories. Although it was somewhat odd, we Japanese Canadians at that time did not want to believe that Japan could lose, and so could not help but feel upset when we would hear of the allied victories. Those Japanese Canadians born in Canada were just as upset as those born in Japan. Then, on August 15, 1945 we heard the emperor's speech over the radio and learned of Japan's surrender.

After that many things hap-

pened in the Japanese Canadian community. First, the anti-Japanese MP's adopted many methods to repatriate the Japanese Canadians back to Japan. Officials with documents went around to talk to the families in the internment camps. They explained the families had two choices, either return to Japan or move to eastern Canada. The families were urged to decide right away, which left the internment camp in an uproar.

Even in Alberta, any time a few people gathered, there was always a noisy discussion about whether to stay or go back to Japan. There were many who could not make up their minds. Our relatives and we brothers talked and decided to stay in Canada. I'm not sure of the exact percentage, but at that time there were many Japanese Canadians who had never been to Japan. But I think that in Alberta, about 60 percent of the people were talking about going back to Japan.

My brothers, Teizo, Kazuo and myself were often made the object of much criticism. It seems that when some people got together they would say, "*It's strange that those Takasakis were educated in Japan, but not one of them is going back to Japan*". In Alberta, the Higo and Hamazaki families left by train from Lethbridge, bound for Japan. A large number of those in the internment camps returned to Japan. The families left in the internment camps either moved to eastern Canada or remained. A large number of the Japanese Canadians living in Toronto and Montreal arrived after the war ended.

In November 1946, I and a number of other Japanese went to work on a dam building project for

Ontario Hydro. The \$1 per hour wage of those days was very appealing to us. So I gathered a set of carpentry tools and went to a small town in Ontario called Nade (?). Even after having around \$250 a month deducted for taxes, the remainder was still quite a bit. I had left my wife and children and gone to work 344 miles away. So I wanted to work as much as possible, enduring the intense cold and taking home as much money as I could. I was working away from my family for a 6-month period, and in those days, letters were the only form of communication. At the Ontario Hydro job, the Japanese worked together because the wages were good in comparison with other jobs in those days. We worked from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon. The work was not too hard, but it was intensely cold with daily temperatures of minus 30 to minus 35, and sometimes minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit. This cold weather would continue for 5 months. Northern Ontario is considered the coldest spot in Canada. On one Saturday or Sunday, our days off, a number of us were walking along the railroad tracks on our way to shop at a department store in a town called Terrace Bay. There were some Caucasian men with us. Along the side of the track on a cement stand were two rails for emergency purposes. The white men started a strength competition by trying to lift the rail but none of them were able to lift it. Although we were all close to 30 at the time, all us Japanese Canadians were able to lift the rail. I discovered that although Caucasians are big, they lack lower body strength. I

thought that just because something is big doesn't mean it is strong. This was one example, but there were many others after that. I spent two winters working on the dam construction project in Ontario.

While I was working in Ontario, Hisako and the children moved from the previous farm to work for another farmer. We lived without electricity for our years in Alberta. Of course we didn't have a refrigerator, but there are various ways of storing food depending on the place. Most homes had underground cellars for storing vegetables. Our cellar was a hole 2-metres wide and 3-metres deep under the house. A section of the floor was cutout and replaced with a cover. When vegetables were needed, the cover was lifted off and a ladder was lowered into the cellar. These cellars in Alberta were used in summer and winter and were very convenient. You could leave vegetables for a long time and the only thing would be a bit of mould.

The homes we lived in during the years in Alberta were not connected to water mains. We had to order drinking water in 2000-3000-litre wooden tanks delivered by truck every two or three days. Water for washing was obtained from irrigation ditches and stored in a large wooden tank. Whenever we had spare time, we scooped the clear water from the top of the tank with a bucket for washing rice, vegetables, clothes, etc.

This article was extracted from a translation by Mayumi Takasaki of a memoir written in Japanese by Yukinori Takasaki. a

Jiro Kamiya, Master Carpenter by Mitsuo Yesaki

Japanese immigrants arrived in Canada with the clothes on their backs and in their wicker basket cases and little else. They adopted western clothes and took up the tools of the

primary industries where they found employment. Japanese carpenters were the exception and they arrived in British Columbia with a complement of their unique woodworking

tools. Carpenters were in high demand in the boat building industries at the turn of the Nineteenth Century and they commanded high wages.

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Sannosuke Ennyu received 12.5 cents per hour as a worker for Inverness Cannery during the summer of 1894 whereas a shipwright earned 30 cents per hour.

Jiro (Tsuneki) Kamiya was born in 1910 into a family of master carpenters who built churches, custom houses and institutional and commercial buildings. The Tsuneki family in Shizuoka can trace their lineage back 300 years to the time of Iyeyasu Tokugawa, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate. When Jiro completed grade 8 his teachers encouraged his father to have his son pursue further studies to become an architect. At that time his father's company, which was the largest contractor in Shizuoka, was building a large high school and near completion. However, during a heavy storm the building collapsed. There was no such thing as builder's insurance in those days so the contractor had to rebuild the structure at his own expense which put a big strain on his father's company. Therefore at the age of 15, Jiro was told to quit school and apprentice as



Jiro Kamiya examining some of his Japanese carpentry tools. (JCNM photo, 2001)

a carpenter. He learned his trade very well and after many years he longed to venture on his own and asked his sister, Kane Saito in B.C. if she would sponsor him. After waiting for 5 years his application was finally approved and he immigrated to Canada in 1933 bringing with him some basic carpentry tools, including a selection of saws, planes and chisels.

Jiro worked for his sister's family, Senjuro Saito in Pitt Meadows for his room and board for three years. In 1936 he went back to Japan and married Toneko Kamiya. His wife was able to emigrate in 1937 and they stayed with the Saito's for a further one and half years. Jiro began working at Hammond Cedar mill in 1937 and on the weekends he helped at his sister's farm. At the sawmill the Japanese workers were paid 55 cents per hour and worked an 8-hour day, 5-days a week. He also did some carpentry work for the mill but was paid the same wage. In 1941 Jiro bought a fourteen-acre farm for \$1500 and built a 4-bedroom house which was completed just as WW II broke out. The government compensated him \$1000 for the house and land and after taking off their commission and expenses he netted \$700. Rather than go to an internment camp in B.C. the family decided to go to Manitoba to work on a sugar beet farm where he and his friends, the Yamada's, built housing for the Japanese internees. Jiro took all his carpentry tools to Manitoba as part of his allotted luggage. A crew of 4 carpenters built two 16'x24' houses each day for the Japanese families in southern Manitoba. At the beginning they had no vehicle so they went to the job site by bicycle, which was often 5-6 miles from home. Jiro was able to secure carpentry work, building and renovating houses when he was not working on the sugar beet farm

planting and harvesting.

In October 1942 he was able to purchase a car so that he could get to the job sites during winter. By December he had lined up work for the following year and was paid \$1.25 per hour which was more than the \$1 paid to other local carpenters. In 1948 he was hospitalized with an ear infection and lost the hearing in one ear which was the result of working in the cold weather. In 1949 he decided to move west and went to Kamloops to where his sister's family were interned. Here he worked for the carpenters union and secured work throughout the interior.

In 1950 Jiro visited Vancouver looking for work and a companion traveler happened to mention Jiro to Sam Matsumoto of Matsumoto Shipyards. Sam came to Jiro's hotel and hired him as a finishing carpenter to build the cabins for his boats. Jiro worked at Matsumoto Shipyards for about nine years in charge of all interior cabin carpentry. After leaving Matsumoto's he joined the union and worked on many major projects including the Royal Centre and Guinness Towers on all aspects of the building but specializing on finishing work. He retired in 1980 and took on odd jobs for friends and helped to build two houses on Mayne Island for his nephews before building his own 3600 sq. ft. house on Mayne Island in 1985.

Jiro essentially used Japanese wood working tools for finishing carpentry work, which produced a much finer finish. Traditional Japanese wood working tools are radically different from European tools in that Japanese saws and planes cut on the pull thrust whereas European tools cut on the push thrust. European saws are generally longer to suit the larger European carpenters so they can cut more per thrust than the smaller

Japanese saws. They also have grip handles for exerting greater force than possible with the straight handles on Japanese saws. The blades of the Japanese saws are thinner so require less effort to cut and also cuts faster. The teeth on Japanese rip and crosscut saws are smaller so there are more teeth per unit length than their European counterparts. Consequently, Japanese saws give finer and more accurate cuts.

European planes for shaving large planks have grip handles on the backs, and frequently the fronts, of the plane bodies. These grip handles assist in applying more force and permit making longer shaves.

Japanese planes are plain rectangular blocks of hardwood. The blades of the European planes are thinner than those of Japanese planes.

Japanese chisel and plane blades differ further from their European counterparts in having slightly concave backs. Plane and chisel blades are sharpened by honing a single bevel angle on the front and finished on the back by removing the burr. The concave backs help maintain the cutting edge of the blades straight. The cutting edge of a blade with a flat back tends to become rounded with honing at a flat angle. Both European and Japanese blades are made of

laminated steel.

Japanese adze heads are fitted with arched handles whereas European adze heads have straight handles. The arched handle gives flexibility to Japanese adzes, permitting fine and deep cuts to be made with a single tool. Conversely, separate European adzes with different angles are required to affect fine and deep cuts.

Most of the older Japanese carpenters own their own tools, which they sharpen themselves. Today many of the hand tools have been replaced by power tools that require less effort and complete the task much more quickly. a

Still Lingers On: The 60th Anniversary of the Internment.

Part 1 “No Alternative” by Tom I. Tagami



Tom Itsuro Tagami on the job, age 19, waiting for chokers full of logs to come in to be unhooked. Paldi, BC. (Tom I. Tagami photo, 1939)

I was born in 1920 in Koksilah, British Columbia and grew up in the nearby logging town of Paldi, where I attended public school and then worked for the Mayo Brothers Timber Company Ltd. from when I was 16 until I was 22 years of age - all within eight miles of my birthplace. The following is an account of my personal memories and my

family’s experiences when we were uprooted from our home in April 1942. Why did the Canadian government forcibly remove me to more than 100 miles inland from the BC coast - when my only “crime” was that I was a Canadian citizen of Japanese ancestry? It happened 60 years ago but the memory of what I had to endure still lingers on in the back of my mind.

In his book *Fragile Freedoms*, T. Berger writes, “*Abuse of Japanese Canadians did not begin with the Second World War. Rather the uprooting, confinement, dispossession, dispersal and attempted deportation of Japanese Canadians, was the result of a long history of discrimination against Asians as second class citizens, by racist politicians namely Ian Mackenzie, Thomas Reid M.P. for Vancouver and Alderman Halford Wilson and others*”.

Pre-war restrictions on Japanese Canadians were as follows: we could not vote, hold public office, or become professionals (lawyers, pharmacists, etc.). We were forbidden to

work on Crown land or at government jobs. Despite these restrictions, by 1939, more and more second generation Japanese Canadians were entering the work force and getting higher paid jobs. Farmers in the Fraser Valley, after years of hard work clearing land, were successfully growing berries and other produce. To some racist politicians the Japanese were becoming an “economic menace,” and these public officials were looking for some means of moving Japanese Canadians from the coast.

By the order of the federal government, registration of all persons of Japanese origin over the age of 18 was begun by the RCMP on March 14, 1941 and completed towards the end of August 1941. Those born in Canada were issued white registration cards, naturalized Canadians received salmon coloured cards, and Japanese nationals carried yellow cards. Each person’s ID card included information such as vital statistics, fingerprints, photo and ID number.

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Volunteers building an addition onto the Japanese Hall, Paldi, BC. (Tom I. Tagami photo, 1940)

When I heard the news on the radio that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, it took me by surprise. Next thing I knew we were supplied with rolls of black tar paper and told to cover all the windows so no lights would show outside - a complete blackout. Cars were allowed to show half-inch by three-inch strips of headlight only. All people of Japanese origin were put on curfew right away, and nobody was allowed to wander after dark. The way the civil defense was giving out orders, it just felt like they were expecting Japanese bombers would be bombing the west coast of Canada via Alaska at any time.

On February 7, 1942, all male enemy aliens (those who were not Canadian born or naturalized citizens) between the ages of 18 and 45 were ordered to leave the coastal protected area, moving at least 100 miles inland. The first group left the coast on February 23, 1942. Most were sent to work in road camps near the Rocky Mountains, paid 25 cents an hour for their labour. On February 24, 1942, Order-in-Council P.C. 1486 was passed by Cabinet. This order empowered the Minister of Justice to

control the movements of all Japanese Canadians living within the protected areas.

Our family of 11 (including my older brother's wife and baby son) received orders on February 26, 1942, to be ready to move from the coast within 24 hours' notice. This was little time to sort out our property, car, and over 30 years of possessions, household goods and personal belongings. Adults over 18 years were only allowed to take one clothes bag and a small suitcase, for a grand total of 150 pounds of baggage per person. We had to quit our jobs then, and ran to purchase clothes bags and suitcases before they sold out.

We still had our 1941 Chevrolet sedan, so I went to talk with the RCMP constable in Duncan and asked him how our chances were in getting out of the 100 mile coastal zone. We had five or six working adults in our family, so I said that we would voluntarily leave the coast as a self-sufficient group, making our way to the interior of the province. He said that we could take a chance and try to go, but he was pretty sure that we would be stopped at Hope,

our possessions confiscated, and we would be sent to Hastings Park and then on to an internment camp. Considering this outcome, we decided not to try to leave on our own.

In the meantime, all the Japanese Canadian families in Paldi were, like us, preparing as best they could for the forced move. Space had been allocated in the Japanese Community Hall for each family to store what furniture and belongings they could not sell at reasonable prices. We still figured that, being Canadians, we would be back in six months time. But we were never to return to our *furusato*, our home town, where we were born and grew into adulthood.

We could have kept on working for the lumber company. But expecting at anytime to receive a 24 hour notice to leave, we were not in any mood to continue working in a dangerous logging job. We arranged with Cowichan Merchants in Duncan to store our more valuable possessions upstairs in their department store. We tried selling some of our things, but nobody had any pity on us, and tried to get everything for nothing. We just kept out a few pots and pans to get by on, and stored the rest of our belongings in the Japanese Community Hall. We put all we could in the *tansu* chests that dad had made.

On March 4, 1942, the BC Security Commission was established to plan, supervise, and direct the evacuation. Cabinet passed Order-in-Council P.C. 1665, which stated that all property which Japanese Canadians were unable to carry with them, would be held by the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property, as a "protective measure." This order also gave the Custodian the right to dispose of Japanese Canadian property without the owners' knowledge or consent.

In late March or early April 1942, all owners of vehicles and

wheeled equipment were notified to bring them to Victoria, BC, and turn them in to the RCMP. It must have been quite a sight to see everything from old lumber carriers to Model T Fords lined up along the road. We didn't want our 1941 Chevrolet sedan taken away by the Security Commission, so we transferred it to Wilson and Cabeldu Ltd., from whom we had purchased the car, and asked them to send us the money when they sold it. The office of the Custodian found out about it and sent a letter to Wilson and Cabeldu, dated October 29, 1942, instructing them to forward the balance of the money for the car to them. I was later able to view the statement provided by Wilson and Cabeldu, and saw they charged us a re-sale fee of 20% - which worked out to \$185 out of the sale price of \$925. There was no way of getting away from the claws of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property.

On April 20, 1942 we received word from the BC Security Commission to be ready to catch the 6:30 a.m. Greyhound bus on April 22, 1942 that would take us to Chemainus to board the **S.S. PRINCESS ADELAIDE**. Heavy baggage such as clothes bags and suitcases had to be ready an hour earlier for the freight truck coming at 5:30 a.m. I don't think any Japanese Canadians in Paldi had any sleep the night of April 21, 1942, as we had to pack what we had and have it down to the Japanese hall about 3 blocks away for storage. We made a whole stack of sandwiches with what food we had, to last us till we got to Hastings Park. Waiting for the day we were to leave was nerve wracking. But when it came time to leave our house to catch the Greyhound bus it was a sad moment as we did not know where our final destination was to be. It wasn't too bad for the younger ones as they thought it was an adventure. But for myself and my older siblings and parents - we shed a few tears when the bus started to leave Paldi. It was early but a few East Indian and Caucasian friends we went to school with were there to see us off. We had hopes of returning within six months. But 60 years have gone by and I never did return to my old stomping grounds where I lived till I was 22 years old.

On April 22, 1942, 470 Japanese Canadians boarded the **S.S. PRINCESS ADELAIDE** and set out for Vancouver. The oldest female, Mrs. R. Okada of Chemainus, was 64 years old. Mr. M. Nagano who had been a truck gardener at Duncan for 44 years was probably the oldest man in the group. It was around 1:00 p.m. when the **S.S. PRINCESS ADELAIDE** was finally loaded up. By the time we got to the cafeteria on the boat, there was a big line-up inside waiting for food and a sign outside the door said "No Food Left," so we had to eat the few left over sandwiches we had till we got to



From the left, Kazuma Yonemura, Tom Itsuro Tagami, and Shigeki Sora out on a daypass from Hastings Park. Vancouver, BC. (Tom I. Tagami photo, 1942)

Hastings Park.

We reached Vancouver on a typical rainy afternoon around 5:00 p.m. where they had busses waiting to take us to Hastings Park. By the time we got our invalid father up the dozens of steps, into the bus and arrived at Hastings Park, it was getting late so whether we had anything more than a few slices of bread to eat I don't know.

When we got to Hastings Park they were going to put Dad - who had suffered a severe stroke some years earlier - in the able-bodied men's dormitory, so I had to go talk to the authorities and they finally decided to let Dad and Mom stay temporarily in a one-horse stall in the Livestock Building. The rest of us were segregated according to age. My sisters Sis and Akiye, and my sister-in-law Tomi, were in another part of the Livestock Building. My younger brothers Yosh and Suyeo were in another building with teenage boys. My brothers Ichiro and Frank were in the regular men's dormitory with me. On arrival at Hastings Park everyone was given two heavy, scratchy army blankets to use for bedding. As soon as we got settled in double-decker bunks, they started calling people's names up on the P.A. system. They instructed those named to report to the BC Security Commission

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office first thing the next day. We were just exhausted so we tossed the blankets over ourselves and went right to sleep – clothes and all.

There were already about one thousand persons staying in Hastings Park. The west coast fishermen and their families had arrived first, and the people from upper Vancouver Island (Cumberland and other communities) had arrived the day before us. We were harassed the moment we arrived there. We went to the office the next morning to be registered and they stamped our registration cards, “Registered with the Custodian.” From that moment, we lost all our rights as Canadian citizens and became “Enemy Aliens,” at the mercy of the BC Security Commission.

Most of the married men and the ones who arrived in Hastings Park the day before were able to get jobs in the Cook House and other areas. By the time my brother Frank and I had to register, we had only two choices: sign up to go away to road camps in the Rocky Mountains, or be sent to prisoner of war camps in Ontario. We were not allowed to leave the office building until we had made our choice. Because we had no alternative, Frank and I signed up to go to a road camp. When we returned to the men’s dormitory, our belongings were gone. We asked one of the supervisors there and he told us that we were transferred to the junior boys dorm where all the men who signed to go to road camps were to be held under armed guard. He said to report to the BC Security Commission office the next day and get our tickets to go to the road camp.

The next morning we went to the office and by chance I ran into a fellow whom I had met in my travels to Vancouver. A casual acquaintance, he was a *judoka* and was asso-

ciated with Etsuji Morii, who worked closely to assist the BC Security Commission to carry out the forced removal. Because I knew of his connections, I asked Morii’s man if he could do a favour for me and find a way Frank and I could stay in Hastings Park for a while. He said to give him five minutes and went to talk to his sister who was a secretary for one of the authorities. He came back and said to go see his sister – when we talked to her, she had two jobs for us working as janitors in the kitchen. So we were allowed to stay in Hastings Park until the BC Security Commission decided to let families go as a group. It was a cat and mouse game in Hastings Park - if you knew the right person you had no problems.

I tried to get better quarters for Dad and Mom, but it was the best they had even though the stalls were all green and the boards soaked in horse urine. At least they had their own stall and there were other invalids in the same section. For the time being, we had jobs and were able to stay in Hastings Park. Pretty near all of my friends who were single decided to go to the prisoner of war camps in Ontario. In the meantime hundreds of single men from Vancouver and the Fraser Valley tried to find ways to avoid being shipped out. Eventually a whole bunch of them got caught and were sent out east to prisoner of war camps.

In the meantime the BC Security Commission gave us one day off from work and gave us a one day pass to stay out until curfew time. The first day off, I went to see Mr. Eikichi Kagetsu, who had owned a large lumber company on Vancouver Island. I went to see him at his office on Alexander Street, because I had heard that he was organizing two self-supporting groups going to the inte-

rior of BC. I told him that we had four or five able-bodied workers in our family, but he had too many families clamouring to go with his groups so was not able to accept any more people. I made further inquiries about how we could move out of the 100 mile zone. There were people going to the interior, to the Kamloops and Kelowna areas. But I was not successful in finding a way for us to go. There was also a group fighting hard with the BC Security Commission to get permission for families to be moved together. So I adopted the strategy of keeping my ears open and my mouth closed until the opportune time came to make a move.

When we registered at Hastings Park, we were supposed to declare anything of value. I had a life insurance policy worth about \$125 then, but I kept quiet about it. The first chance I had, I went downtown to the Manufacturer’s Life Building and asked them to close my life insurance policy. I was not going to let the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property get his hands on it. The staff at Manufacturer’s Life told me to leave my policy as it was, but I insisted that they give me cash for it. They issued me a cheque for the full amount.

I went to the Bank of Montreal and tried to cash the cheque, but they refused to do it. To no avail, I told them that I had been a loyal customer at the Duncan branch, until we were uprooted from our home. I tried a few more banks but nobody would cash the cheque for me. I was wondering what the hell I was going to do with an un-cashable cheque when I ran into a guy I knew from Vancouver, and he said he still had an account in a bank. So we went to his bank and cashed the cheque. Boy I realized then that the Japanese were not thought to be trustworthy anymore. a

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Tashme School Days by Marie Katsuno



*Marie with Tashme internment camp grade 3 students.
(Marie Katsuno photo, ca 1946)*

One summer holiday turned into a five-year stay in an area of West Vancouver in the 1930's. Due to pneumonia at a tender age and doctor's advice that perhaps salty breeze may be a helpful remedy, a search for such a place ended at the Great Northern Cannery, a fish-canning village by the water where a few Japanese residents lived. Family acquaintances there and an unoccupied cabin resulted in a change of residence from our home in east Burnaby to this area.

Upon completion of junior and high schools in West Vancouver, the Pacific war erupted and we found ourselves returning to our home in Burnaby. With no other Japanese families in that area, it seems we were almost the last to evacuate in late October. We chose Tashme, the nearest relocation center, expecting to return home soon. We stored large items in the garage and even hid some food under the kitchen floor to be readily available upon our return and finally handed over the house keys to our neighbor across the street.

As we were late arrivals in Tashme, we were placed in a cabin on the last row of living quarters on 10th avenue. It was already severely cold with ice and snow on the ground, with even icicles hanging inside the walls and doors of the entrance. My mother came down with pneumonia. On a cold and clear night with a full moon and the ground covered with packed snow, she was taken by stretcher to the hastily built hospital. A far cry from a Christmas card picture of silver moon and snow; fortunately she came through very well.

Independent living quarters were made for a minimum of five persons. As we were only three in the family, we shared the cabin with another couple. Water and wood were plentiful; water was brought inside to the wooden sink by buckets. We shared the wood-burning stove. Bathroom features were best not recalled.

However, the big public baths were large with plenty of hot running water! If I remember correctly, some of the Issei population waited for short wave news from Japan (the RCMP often turning their eyes the other way and most became good friends) and this would be printed in several sheets and distributed. Needless to say this overseas news and local news would be quite different.

On that last day of October 1942, soon after my arrival in Tashme, I attended a small gathering brought together by Miss Hide Hyodo, Terry Hidaka and other educators. This meeting was convened to provide school age children with a place to continue their learning. From this modest gathering, classes were started shortly thereafter in what had been a huge old barn. Portable wooden panels were erected to divide the elementary grade classes. Japanese men handmade the wooden desks and benches to seat two pupils. Upon opening the big barn door for start of classes, the sound of pupils and movement emanating from inside could be intense at times!

Becoming instant teachers was no easy task; my own first assignment was first graders whom I later realized were more difficult than third and fourth graders. Lacking materials, each evening meant stacks of homework to prepare for the next day's lessons: colored pictures were drawn on rough newsprint, lessons drawn with a purple pencil onto gelatin pads and hand-rolled onto paper. After printing several pages, items would be hardly visible. Throughout those years with the school, I taught all elementary grades and also assisted high school students with correspondence courses in the evenings. This latter task was initiated with the help from the missionary teachers.

When the B.C. Commission recognized our classes as a regular school, we saw a vast improvement as complete sets of regular textbooks and teaching materials became available. During each summer holiday season all the teachers from the many other camps and areas gathered in New Denver for teachers' training courses with the assistance of instructors from the Vancouver Normal School.

Despite some great inconveniences of internment life, parents were eager for their children to keep up their studies and absentees were rare. PTA meetings called for patience because of communications gaps, with most of us having some difficulty reaching out to the parents with our less than fluent Japanese. Here is where Miss Kayo Ochiai, later one of our principals, became invaluable because of her excellent knowledge of the Japanese language and also for her poise and confident manner, which put parents at ease.

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Tashme internment camp school staff. (Marie Katsuno photo, 1946)

As years went by living under such close conditions, for the most part we seemed to develop quite a close kinship with our fellow Japanese. A person's reaction to Tashme depended upon the age of that person at the time of the evacuation. Children had fun and others had their education disrupted, but for the Issei this was generally a time of sorrow. However, many learned to make the most of this confined area, which now seemed like a mini town. Baseball teams with Japanese names were formed; school and public concerts and sports meets were organized; social dances were held in the barn

school (partitions were taken down to make a big hall) chaperoned by our missionary teachers (an absolute necessity as far as the Issei were concerned). May Day queen and maypole dancing prevailed, as did weddings and funerals as life went on. At the same time during those years, many folks moved to other areas. As friends left we would find ourselves gathered at the main entrance of the camp to say farewell to the departing party standing on the backs of trucks. In the meantime we learned the B.C. Custodians had sold our home in Burnaby for \$2000, which was duly sent to us, minus their fee.

I might add that during these years my father who was already well over 70 years of age had been receiving his old age pension on a regular monthly basis.

With the closure of the camp a year after the end of the Pacific war, the ultimatum of going to Japan or eastern Canada was a very difficult decision for many of us. Because of the advanced age of my parents and their wish to see their homeland once more, I accompanied them with the thought of an adventure, and quite an adventure it was!

My thoughts on returning to Canada, after an absence of more than 50 years, was that it was like making one big circle returning to live in West Vancouver again and in helping at the Japanese Canadian National Museum, not far from where I grew up as a child. I am happy to have reunited with a few of the former students. The United Church missionary teachers were ladies repatriated back to Canada during the war years. They assisted us in Tashme and then returned to their former girl schools in Japan. My own daughter graduated from one such school in Tokyo. I graduated from the United Church kindergarten on Powell and Jackson, which now is the Buddhist Temple. a

My Most Vivid Memories of the Evacuation by Midge Ayukawa

My family lived on the fringe of Japan-town, Vancouver, in the southeastern section of Strathcona. In the pre-war era, it was a peaceful cosmopolitan working-class neighbourhood. Although my playmates were Canadians of many ethnic backgrounds, I was very conscious of being Japanese. I attended Japanese school, the Buddhist Sunday School at Princess and Cordova Streets, and spoke only Japanese with my parents.

This world was completely destroyed by the upheaval that

followed the bombing of Pearl Harbour. When I reflect on that period, thousands of images appear. Some are traumatic; others are puzzling, while many are almost idyllic. I guess that is what life is all about, full of highs and lows.

What are my most vivid memories?

March 13, 1942. As I prepared to leave for school, I heard my parents arguing - a rare occurrence. It was the day when the two, both Japanese citizens, usually made their monthly visit to the

RCMP. My mother said she was not going - "It's the 13th, a 'bad' day, and something terrible is sure to happen!" My father impatiently replied, "Don't be a fool. What will be, will be!" By the time I returned from school, it was obvious that something momentous had taken place because they had been out shopping to prepare for my father's departure for an interior road camp. My father left us several days later. We bid him farewell at the CNR station (now the bus terminal). I was bewildered, did not know when I

would see him again, and I felt a deep hollow in my heart that remained for a long while.

Mid-April. One Saturday I was strolling along Powell Street with my music case, on the way to piano lessons with Mary Naka whose studio was on the corner of Main and Powell Streets. I heard a piercing whistle, then the sound of running feet. As I stood bolted to the sidewalk, I saw “huge” Mounties grab little Issei men and throw them in patrol cars. Then I saw my eighteen-year-old eldest brother and his friend strolling nonchalantly toward me. I ran up to my brother and tearfully urged him to go quickly before he too got caught. My brother just laughed uproariously, patted me on the head, and said, *“Don’t worry, kid sister, I’m okay. I haven’t got my orders yet!”*

Early September. My mother was told that we were to leave the next day for Slocan. There were now only four of us in our home on Georgia Street - my fifteen and six year old brothers, my mother and I. It was my older brother who had to do the packing as my mother rushed about buying such deemed necessities as salted salmon, which she had ordered in advance. A young Nisei, a UBC student, the son of my father’s “surrogate brother” came by to help. (This “brother” was from Hiroshima prefecture like my parents and was a close friend. My parents, having no relatives in Canada, regarded him as “family”.) He had heard that we had received our orders to leave. My mother, defying the authorities, had my brother build a box for our

kitchen stove. It had been bought about a year before and had been my mother’s prize acquisition. She was NOT going to leave it behind. As it turned out, we were the only family in Lemon Creek with our own kitchen stove. It served us well. With it I baked all our bread so that we did not have to pay 9 cents a loaf - a princely sum in those days!

Slocan. We lived in a floorless tent in Popoff for a few weeks. I thought it was an adventure eating in a mess-hall tent, but the outhouses were unpleasant. When the autumn cold weather descended upon us, my father brought into the tent a nail-keg with smouldering coal to chase away the chill. He did the same on the first night in the newly built house we were assigned in Lemon Creek. There, however, the carbon monoxide fumes had not been able to escape and we all became sick. A few days later, our young Nisei friend appeared again and when he heard about the near disaster, he was alarmed. We soon received a sheet-metal stove he had purchased for us in Nakusp. I wonder if TEU, now a professor emeritus of Stanford University, has any inkling of how we appreciated his thoughtful deeds?

When school finally began in April 1943, my days were quite full. There were school concerts, spelling bees, school newspapers, and sports. In winter we skated on the Slocan River, where we swam in the summer. We stood on the back of a huge logging truck to go to cheer our baseball teams when they played in other centres. At times transportation was not available.

Once, two girl friends and I walked five miles along the railroad tracks to Bay Farm to watch my eldest brother and his team play baseball. After the game was over, we couldn’t face the long trek back and I begged my tired brother and his friends to give us rides back on their bikes!

We danced to music provided by a hand-wound gramophone. At times it would require hurried attention. At both elementary and high school parties, games had to be pre-approved by the PTA, and dancing was kept to a minimum. Life, to young people like me who had their families intact was quite enjoyable. But this was undoubtedly due to the thoughtfulness and concern of our parents who shielded us from their worries and problems. We lived on our savings. When my father’s life insurance (endowment policy) matured, the government doled it out monthly. How difficult it must have been for my parents to be depleting their hard earned savings! They had originally dreamed of returning to Japan, but in the thirties, they had decided to remain in Canada and had been looking for a suitable house to purchase. Although they were concerned when they realized they would eventually need to begin all over again in Japan or Canada, they did not express their fears in my presence. And when we began our new life east of the Rockies, in Hamilton, in 1946, they never talked about what could have been, but just carried on without complaint. Would I, could I, behave in like manner? a

Watari Dori (A Bird of Passage) by Larry Maekawa

There was a time when the month of December approached, the painful memories of the evacuation of the Japanese Canadian revived. As the years went by those loathsome memories faded away. But

that tragic event of the World Trade Centre in New York on September the 11th brought back the torturing memories of the forties. Sixty years have slipped by since then. It had been a long hard struggle for many

Japanese Canadian to establish themselves in the unknown land.

So, where were you on December the 7th of 1941? On the 1st of December, the president of Ucluelet Japanese Fishermen’s Co-

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op, Kamekichi Tsujiuchi, advisor Kanzo Maekawa (my father) and myself made a business trip to Vancouver for one week. In the streets were newspapers full of big head lines of the war in Europe, and Japanese papers reporting the deteriorating American-Japanese relationship.

Whoever you met, the subject of conversation was about the war.

On the 6th of December, we decided to go to a Chinese restaurant, **The New Peking**, on Powell Street to celebrate the completion of our successful business. Maekawa picked up a Japanese paper, TAIRIKU NIPPO and took it to the table, and started to read. Tsujiuchi and I were looking through the menu. Suddenly, Maekawa said with a grim look, *“Look at this news! There’s going to be a war between America and Japan. It’s absolutely inevitable.”* Tsujiuchi was less concerned and said, *“Don’t worry, Japanese are too occupied with the war in China. Let’s eat.”* Tsujiuchi and I dug into the dishes but Maekawa was too serious with the news and did not eat much.

Next morning, December the 7th, at 9:00 AM, we went to the **Empress Café** on Powell Street to have breakfast. Being a Sunday morning, there was hardly any people in the café. In those days most Japanese stores had no radios. After breakfast Maekawa decided to visit his brother and his relatives on Sea Island. We walked to **Yama Taxi** and sent Maekawa off. Tsujiuchi and I took a separate taxi to catch the 11:00 AM C.P.R. ferry to Nanaimo. After the ferry departed from the pier, I walked out to the deck to see the splendid view of the snow capped mountains. The prevailing westerly wind was brisk and chilly. A gentleman nodded to me with a smile as we passed each other. Dark clouds

were building over the western sky as if to indicate that there was a storm brewing in the distance. At 2: 00 PM we boarded the bus to Port Alberni and finally reached there at 5:00 PM. We walked to the hotel owned by Chiyeno Kuroyama.

As we entered the hotel Chiyeno greeted us with a grave look and said, *“A dreadful event has happened. America and Japan is at war. Japanese planes are bombing Hawaii.”* The hotel was full of Japanese sawmill workers playing cards. This was their only recreation on Sunday nights. We were guided into the dining room. Short wave radio was going on in full blast in Japanese. We sat down and listened to the news in disbelief. While Chiyeno was preparing our supper, she went into the parlour and yelled at the men to stop the game; but they just ignored her, saying, *“Japan will never do such a stupid thing, it’s only a false rumor.”* Around 7:00 PM, very serious news came in. *“Emperor Hirohito had officially declared war against America.”* Chiyeno immediately ran into the parlour and told the news to the men. She gathered all the cards and chips and put them away. This time the men took the news seriously. They folded their arms and hung their heads without words.

Before long four RCMP officers stormed into the hotel with

drawn pistols. One of them looked around and said, *“Big meeting, eh.”* *“Now, we’re in big trouble,”* I thought to myself. They gathered the Canadian-born in one corner, naturalized Canadians in the other corner and Japanese nationals in the center, and checked everyone’s I.D. cards. (In 1938, the RCMP carried out compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians over sixteen years). They rounded up all the Japanese nationals and took them out of the hotel. Later we learned that they were sent directly to the immigration building in Vancouver, without even a chance to see or say goodbye to their families.

Next morning Tsujiuchi and I took the mail boat to Ucluelet. When we arrived there, feelings between occidentals and Japanese were tense. All Japanese school kids had been sent home. Telephones were cut off. Using our own fishing boats was prohibited. On 15th of December, we were ordered to take our boats to New Westminster. We all had to pay our own expenses - lodging and return tickets to Ucluelet. After returning home, indescribable emotions of sadness and anxiety went through my mind, when I saw the float with no fishing boats. Finally on March 22nd, the day came for us to evacuate from our familiar dwellings of many years. We bid our last farewell to our dear



Wood gang cutting logs for fuel. (Larry Maekawa photo, 1942)

old Ucluelet from the deck of the CPR mail boat **MAQUINNA**. We were treated kindly on board the ship. To serve fifty families was quite a turmoil in the dining room. At Port Alberni we were herded onto the train to Nanaimo and then onto the ferry to Vancouver. Here we were crammed into buses like cattle and taken to the infamous Hastings Park. We were without any food for seven hours during this horrific trip.

As soon as we entered the building a terrible stench hit our noses. This was a horse stable! Many Japanese people had come from East Coast of Vancouver Island already. All they talked about was the dreadful condition of the building. A number of Vancouver Japanese residents had been hired by the administration; and it was their arrogant and officious attitude towards us Japanese that infuriated us more than anything else. Supper was served in a huge open area of the building, where the live-stock had been kept. We had never seen such wretched conditions - thousands of people sitting at the table as far as the eye could see. The volunteers who came there before us served food. We slept in the bunk beds on bumpy mattresses that were filled with hay. Next day men were ordered to stuff the bags with hay to make more mattresses for those who were following us. People from Skeena River District arrived, and then the Ocean Falls group came in. The place was in chaos, as I have never seen.

On the third day a list of one hundred and twenty names that was of military age were posted on the bulletin board. We were told that we were going to be sent to Schreiber, Ontario to work on the roads. We were all prepared that nothing could be any worse than Hastings Park. On March 29th, we boarded the train at CPR Station. Many Japanese Vancouver residents came to the



Schreiber road gang. (Larry Maekawa photo, 1942)

station to cheer us. Finally the train left the station and started to climb the mountains, but we were not in the mood to appreciate the spectacular scenery. Later on we started to feel hungry, so we asked the Mountie when the food was going to be served. He told us that our train was hooked behind the freighter and there was no dining car. So we had to wait until we reached Banff, where we were allowed to go to the station to buy our lunches.

Next day we arrived in Calgary. Here again we went to the station and bought our sandwiches. The train continued eastward. When I saw the snow capped mountains disappear behind the horizon, I could not help but hold back my tears. In Regina we had to rush to buy our sandwiches, as the train did not stop too long. At this rate we were able to have a decent meal only once a day. As the train chugged through the prairies, I was amazed at the vast and boundless land. *“What a huge country Canada is! Will we have an opportunity to re-establish in the East, or are we going to work on the road until the end of the war? And what next?”* These gloomy thoughts went through my mind all the way. Winnipeg was the last station where we were allowed to get off the train to buy our lunches.

At last, on April 1st, we

arrived at our destination, Schreiber Road Camp. When we left Hastings Park, tulips were in full bloom. We were shocked to see four feet of snow on the ground, and the temperature was -15 degrees F. We threw our luggage on the snow and jumped down from the train. The snow came up to our chests. A mounted police and a superintendent greeted us at the camp. We immediately told them that we were starving, as we haven't eaten since leaving Winnipeg. The supt. wanted to know if there was an experienced cook in the group. Fortunately there was one who had been a chef in Vancouver. He recruited three other helpers and they were guided into the kitchen. About an hour later we heard the gong signaling us that the breakfast was ready. We all rushed into the mess-house. There were heaps of bacon, fried eggs and toast on the table. We were all so hungry that we hoarded them on our plates. I remember taking four fried eggs and six slices of bacon. Of course I was young then! After we finished eating we went back to the sleeping quarter. The building was very roughly built. All the 2x4 studs and the rafters were exposed. Light was coming through the cracks in the wall. Several stoves that were made from old forty-five gallon drums were scattered here and

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Evacuees thinning sugar beets on Glencoe farm. (Larry Maekawa photo, 1942)

there. Later we learned that this camp was built in the depression period to accommodate the unemployed men from the big cities. We were also surprised to notice the signatures of doctors and lawyers scribbled on the walls. So you can imagine how bad conditions were in those days.

Before starting to work on the road, we told the superintendent that our clothing were not suitable to work in the sub-zero weather, and requested that he take us to town to buy heavier clothing. He took us in his truck to the only clothing store in town, and we furnished ourselves with heavy clothing from head to toe. We almost cleaned up his store. Then we went into a café for lunch, and we were surprised to see that the owner was a Chinese. He welcomed us warmly and told us that this was his first time to see Oriental faces in twenty years. People in the town were friendly and treated us well. At the road camp, our daily tasks were woodcutting and roadwork. We were divided into two groups - wood gang and road gang. They provided us with primitive equipment - bucksaws and axes for the wood gang and picks and shovels for the road gang. Wood gang was kept busy in supplying firewood for the kitchen and the sleeping quarters, while the road gang just went out to pass the time.

In mid-May, a representative from the B.C. Security Commission came to recruit volunteer workers for the sugar beet farms in Southern Ontario. We were getting bored with the road camp life, and we thought it was a good change. Although we fishermen didn't know a sugar beet from a hole in the ground, we volunteered to go. It was 24th of May long weekend when we arrived at Glencoe, the farming center of Ontario. The Ladies Auxiliary of the church had prepared a delicious lunch to welcome us. Their warm gesture touched our hearts deeply. Outside the dormitory the ground was covered with dandelions. When we left Schreiber, snow was still

on the ground. The sudden change of climate, from cold and dry to hot and humid, in less than twenty-four hours was unbearable.

Next morning farmers came to pick us up with their trucks. We were divided into teams of ten men, and each team went with a farmer. When he showed us his farm, we were just fascinated by the vastness of the field. He demonstrated to us how to thin the sugar beet seedlings, which were sowed mechanically in straight lines. The lines seemed to us like a mile long. With a short handled hoe, moving sideways in a half sitting posture, was really a back breaking job. Every hour we had to walk over to a shady tree and take half an hour rest. One day a farmer came over and said, "*I've never seen a bunch of lazy guys like you.*" One of the fellows stood up and retorted, "*Do you know why we were kicked out of B.C.? Because we worked too hard.*" The farmer looked as if he was taken by surprise, "*You are right.*" The farmer said. "*You and us are in the same boat. Those English farmers got their land free from the Crown; but we had to buy our land and we have to work hard to pay for it. We worked sixteen to eighteen hours a day during the summer. And they look down on us, calling us Bull Hunks*". Since then we got along fine and we tried our best to help him out.

Towards the end of October, when the sugar beet season was coming to an end, men started to look for jobs elsewhere. There was an unlimited opening in Kapaskasing in Northern Ontario to cut pulpwood. Many men applied, but the job did not suit me. Entering big cities was severely restricted to the Japanese, but I made up my mind to go to Toronto whatever hindrance there may be. I moved to Etobicoke, just west of Toronto, a small suburban town at the time. I was fortunate to find a room at a Macedonian home for six dollars a month. I wasted no time looking for a job; but there was no suitable job for me. What can a fisherman do in a city? I sure felt like a fish out of water. I went through the ad section of the TORONTO STAR every day. There was a whole page of "help wanted" ads for skilled tradesmen; and I also noticed a large ad for a retraining program for tradesmen at the Central Technical School.

During the wartime the B.C. Security Commission had monitored the movements of Japanese Canadians. I had to obtain permission from them first to go to school. But before doing so, I went directly to the Central Technical School to find out if they would accept me. I went to the principal's office and met with Mr. George Gore. "*Mr. Gore, I came to inquire about your retraining program.*" "*Yes, what is it that you want to know?*" he asked. "*I would like to know if you would take me.*" "*There are no restrictions to anyone. We*

welcome anybody who is willing to learn,” he said in a tender voice. I said “Well, I will get permission from the B.C. Security Commission first, then I will return again.” He stared right into my eyes and emphasized with a sturdy voice, “You are a Canadian. You need no permission from anybody to come to this school.” He led me to the registry office to fill out the form. Mr. Gore turned to me and said, “If you have any problem with the B.C. Security Commission, come and see me.” He was very sympathetic towards the Japanese. “Thank you, sir.” My voice was trembling with deep emotion.

Soon after I left the school I found a dishwashing job at a nearby restaurant. The working hours were from 7 AM to 3 PM, and the school hours were from 4 PM to 10 PM, which suited me just fine. Working fourteen hours a day was strenuous; but perceiving a promising future consoled my weariness.

After six months of hard struggle I received a machinist’s certificate. I went to thank Mr. Gore. He shook my hand and congratulated me and said, “Keep your chin up.” These words are forever imbedded in my heart. I was deeply indebted to Mr. Gore for his kind support and encouragement, which enabled me to

fulfill my hope of achievement.

Next day I walked into the B.C. Security Office and showed the documents to the head officer. He was furious with me for going over his head, and he started to lecture me. I responded to him quietly, “I have done nothing wrong. I was educated and raised in this country, and I believe in democracy. That’s what our Canadian soldiers are fighting for. I’ll go and look for a job myself.” “Wait,” he said, and reluctantly he pulled out a list of jobs from the drawer, and handed me an introduction form to one machine shop. I went there and I was hired right away. The starting rate was 70 cents an hour. It was a big jump from 25 cents an hour for working in the sugar beet farm. This was the day I saw a light at the other end of the tunnel. In the streets of Toronto we never heard offensive language against the Japanese. Nor did we see vicious anti-Japanese dissemination by the media as it was in Vancouver. I thought the people in the East were more civilized and decent.

The Japanese gradually filtered into Toronto after the end of World War II. Jobs for seamstresses in the garment-manufacturing field were in great demand. Japanese men and women being gifted with skillful hands had no problem getting a job

in the industry. In no time the clothing shops were mostly occupied by the Japanese. They made good money and before long they started to buy cars and houses. Learning a bitter lesson in Vancouver, the Japanese tried not to congregate in one area. That is why you do not find “Little Tokyo” in Toronto. They built the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in the heart of Toronto, and it became the center for Japanese Cultural Studies for all nationalities. The Japanese population in Toronto is now over twenty thousand.

I was hopping from one machine shop to another to build up my skill and experience. In 1952, I was hired at Massey Ferguson’s tool room as a fully qualified toolmaker. Massey was the largest farm implement manufacturer in Canada. Wages and benefits were equal to that of the “Big Three” carmakers. This was the most important turning point in my life. We enjoyed a comfortable life until my retirement in 1982. As we grew older we could not resist the call of Beautiful British Columbia. In 1985, we decided to return to our birthplace, “The Mouth of the Fraser River.”

“Like the water that flows gently along the banks, deeply and quietly we wish to age”. a

JCNM Mochitsuki Report by Stan Fukawa

The 2001 Mochitsuki Event at the National Nikkei Heritage Centre was a great success and a fine way to get ready for the New Year. Estimates of the crowd were over 600 and the beautiful weather helped to make the day a special one for people of all ages who came to eat the freshly-pounded mochi with all the fixings—grated daikon, grated ginger, soy sauce, soy flour (kinako), sugar and seaweed (nori).

As in years past, the Vancouver Japanese Gardeners Assn. provided the main focus of the festivities, steaming and pounding the mochi and enabling the children and adults to try their hand in the traditional skills of working the sticky sweet rice with wooden pestles. As well, Reiko Tagami and John Greenaway provided a touch of excitement with their taiko drums, performing from the second story landing above the crowd in the Ellipse lobby.

Our heartfelt thanks to Mits Hayashi, President of the Nikkei Heritage Centre, who served as the master of ceremonies, to the Gardeners Association, to Reiko and John, and to the Executive Director of the Centre, Roy Sakata, and his staff for their cooperation and support. We also thank Sonray Sales for their annual donations of sweet rice and to the Gladstone Japanese Language School for their sweet rice gift.

Our appreciation to Kinue Watanabe and the ladies of the New Sakura-so Seniors’ Housing for preparing some of the food that the Museum sold—manju, teriyaki chicken, Japanese pickles and castella cakes. A large number of volunteers came out to help in the various stages of the mochi-making, food preparation, organization and sales. The amount of work was huge and we could not have accomplished the event without their expertise and commitment.

JCNM New Board Members by Stan Fukawa

Five new members were added to the Board of Directors at the last Annual General Meeting and they bring the promise of solid contributions to a Museum society which is already blessed with a strong and capable Board.

Bob Bessler is Vice-President of the Greater Vancouver JCCA and he is also on the national executive of the National Association of Japanese Canadians. Bob has been involved in numerous projects, the most prominent Nikkei heritage project being the Steveston Nikkei Heritage Trail, which has been under way for several years and will bring attention to historic sites in the Nikkei past.

Emily Hirai is Advocacy Committee Chair and she works as an office manager for a website hosting company. She is a young person of many talents, having very skilfully facilitated the Museum society's strategic planning session. She has also medalled in competitive badminton and karate and is currently studying classical Japanese dance. Her wedding is in February.

Don Mayede assumes the post of Treasurer immediately on joining the Board. He has recently retired from his accounting career with Telus and brings his experience with other Nikkei voluntary organizations to the table. Expectations are high that he will bring this demanding position under his close control after the usual turbulent first years of many non-profit groups.

Mike Perry-Whittingham assumes the post of Secretary in his first term. He is at Cambie Secondary School in Richmond and has been teaching about the Internment in his Grade 11 Social Studies classes. He is also part of a Ministry of Education funded Teacher Network project which is developing and field-testing curriculum materials on Internment and Redress. He is pursuing a M.Ed. program at the same time.

Henry Shimizu is a retired plastic surgeon and past Chairman of the Japanese Canadian Redress Foundation. He lives in Edmonton and has a residence in Victoria. He brings a vast knowledge of the Nikkei community and its leaders nation-wide, as well as a long career on boards in the arts community in Edmonton. He has generously offered to organize a Museum national board of trustees to raise funds and support across Canada. If anyone can do it, Henry can.

Special thanks to those who have donated generously from October 30, 2001 to January 15, 2002.

Mr. Stan Fukawa, Burnaby, BC
Ms. Midge Ayukawa, Victoria, BC
Mr. Craig Ngai-Natsuhara, Burnaby, BC
Ms. Mieko Amano, Burnaby, BC
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Ms. Emiko Shikaze, New Westminster, BC
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Donation in celebration of Shoichi & Teru Hikichi's 50th Anniversary:

Sam & Margaret Shishido, Vancouver, BC Wataru & Barbara Shishido, Vancouver, BC

Donation in memory of Wayne Sakamoto:

Mrs. Helen Sakamoto

Donation in memory of John Nihei:

Jean & Walter Kamimura, Vancouver, BC Ms. Irene Tsuyuki, White Rock, B.C.

Members are vital part of the Museum, and we welcome your interest and support. New &

Renewing members from the period October 26, 2001 – January 15, 2002.

Ms. Mieko Amano, Burnaby, BC
Ellen Enomoto, Vancouver, BC
Mr. Kiyo Goto, New Westminster, BC
Ted & Nancy Hirota, Windsor, ON
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Tatsuo, Susan Iwamoto & family, Surrey, BC
Walter & Jean Kamimura, Vancouver, BC
Mr. Paul Kariya, Langley, BC
Mr. Hiroshi Kawamoto, Surrey, BC
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Ms. Julie Koyanagi, Vancouver, BC
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Takayuki Matsumura, Scarborough, ON
Ms. Tracy Matsuo, Toronto, ON
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